News Release
For Immediate Release
November 24, 2016
Contact: Morton County PIO
701-595-3596 or 701-426-1587
http://www.co.morton.nd.us/
https://www.facebook.com/MortonCountySD

Thanksgiving Day Protests

NOTE: Photos can be seen on our Google Drive showing left-over items discarded at the Mandan protest site at E. Main and Memorial Highway and a video of today's event at Turtle Hill protest event.
https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BzEKNLJqG3cwRm9xUWQzdGNJYzQ

MANDAN, ND—"Today's multiple protest events on Thanksgiving day were no surprise to our law enforcement team," said Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier. "The energy these paid agitators and protesters exerted to try and draw our law enforcement into confrontations did not work. We will respond in kind to any advances protesters make on our line. It's their decision and they can bring an end to this."

Anti-DAPL pipeline protesters tried hard to distract law enforcement's efforts by conducting protests in three different locations; the Backwater Bridge, Turtle Hill and blocking East Main and Memorial Highway in Mandan.

The Turtle Hill event started this morning at 8:00 when law enforcement monitoring team noticed that protesters near Turtle Island were constructing a wooden bridge on the shore near the Red Warrior Camp to place across the Cantapeta Creek in order to occupy Turtle Hill. Protesters at this camp were observed wearing body armor and masks. They were yelling "remember 73" referring to 1973 when approximately 200 Oglala Lakota and followers of the American Indian Movement (AIM) seized and occupied the town of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Law enforcement gave verbal warnings to the Red Warrior Camp that if they stop making the bridge there would not be any arrests. The warning was ignored.

By 11:30 a.m. there were approximately 350-400 protesters on Turtle Island and shortly after that the makeshift bridge was pushed into the creek and protesters began to cross

over to Turtle Hill. They remained on the shore line and did not climb the hill where law enforcement officers were holding the line.

Verbal commands were given to the 150-200 protesters at the bottom of Turtle Hill to retreat back across the wooden bridge. By 4:45 p.m. protesters were dispersing and making their way back to Turtle Island. No arrests were made.

Protestors continue to violate federal regulations by using drones to harass and surveil law enforcement, endangering those below the device. One drone was flying so low that an officer was able to knock it out of the sky with his hand. It is now in evidence and will be used to determine the operator and possible charges. Protesters also continue to target law enforcement aircraft with laser beams which is a Federal offense.

Around 8:30 this morning 170 protesters left the camps and made their way to East Main and Memorial Highway in Mandan. They blocked the entire intersection at 9:30 am. Law enforcement observed protesters wearing holsters, gas masks and carrying slingshots. Protesters method of law enforcement intimidation was evident when protesters were seen carrying a deceased pigs head on a stick.

A Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) message was sent to local residents at 9:52am advising recipients of the blocked intersection. Officers also gave multiple commands to the crowd to disperse or they would be arrested and their cars towed. By 11:20 protesters were leaving the area and traffic resumed.

Two protesters refused to leave and were consequently arrested.

One was arrested for “physical obstruction of a governmental function” and “disorderly conduct”, both misdemeanors and one for “reckless endangerment” which is a felony. Both were booked into the Morton County Correctional Center.

The third event took place on the Backwater Bridge at 10:30 am when a semi-tractor backed onto the bridge and 150-200 protesters assembled. Law enforcement received information that protesters were planning to “take the Backwater Bridge.”

As of 6:00 pm (Central Time) all protest events have deescalated.

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